

## Emergency Support Function #15 – Public Information

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### ESF Coordinator:

Information Technology Department

### Support Agencies:

Mayor of Tucson  
City Council  
City Manager's Office  
Environmental Services Department  
Tucson Fire Department  
General Services Department  
Communications Division  
Housing & Community Development  
Parks & Recreation Department  
Tucson Police Department  
Tucson Water Department  
Americans With Disabilities Office  
City Attorney's Office  
City Clerk's Office  
American Red Cross  
Pima County Health Department  
Pima County Office of Emergency  
Management & Homeland Security  
R.A.C.E.S.

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### Primary Agency:

Information Technology Department  
Channel 12

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## Purpose

The purpose of this appendix is to establish uniform policies for the effective development, coordination, and dissemination of information to the public in case of an Incident of Local or Regional Significance.

## Scope

During an Incident of Local or Regional Significance, the flow of public information and facts concerning the event, and City government's response to save lives and protect property, must be consolidated. The descriptions provided the public must reflect the best information available.

During such an incident, the Public Information Officer (PIO) function will be operated on a 24-hour basis for a potentially sustained period of time. Trained PIOs from the City government, possibly augmented by other trained personnel, will work in a consolidated Joint Information Center (JIC).

## Situation

### Emergency/Disaster Conditions and Hazards

The City will periodically experience emergency situations that require the dissemination of critical information to the public. The means of dissemination include the news media (radio, television, cable, print), and the Internet. Potential emergency situations include both natural, manmade, and technologically caused events. Public information is critical to alerting citizens to an impending emergency, directing and informing them during the emergency, and assisting them in the response and recovery phases of the event.

### Planning Assumptions

- An emergency or disaster has occurred that activates this ESF
- The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is the best means currently available to give a rapid, initial warning to the public
- The EAS will be used in time sensitive, life threatening situations when the public must be warned immediately of an impending emergency or disaster
- Once the initial warning is accomplished, the PIOs will keep the public informed of what to do to prevent injury or property damage, and what actions City government is taking
- Normal means of communications may not be available - in those situations, nontraditional means of communicating with the public must be established and utilized, for example, posting notices, utilizing public address systems, *etc.*
- Depending on the nature and magnitude of the emergency, different levels of public information will be required (public information may in fact be the primary function occurring during an emergency)
- In the aftermath of a disaster, information is often vague, difficult to confirm, and contradictory
- Rumors or misinformation can cause unnecessary distress among citizens, provoke counter-productive public actions, and impede response and recovery efforts
- PIOs must focus on stopping rumors and providing accurate and timely information using all dissemination methods
- Loss of electrical power and media communication may severely disrupt the normal dispersal of information in the disaster area
- Demand for information regarding the disaster may exceed the capabilities of the Public Information Office staff
- The demand for information within the disaster area may exceed the capabilities of the Public Information Office staff
- In the aftermath of a disaster, there will be a great demand to know what volunteer/aid resources are needed and what are available
- All public information releases will be coordinated with the Incident Commander
- Additionally, all public information releases will be coordinated through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) when it is activated.

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## Concept of Operations

### General

The City of Tucson government will prepare and distribute emergency preparedness information to the public before, during, and after an Incident of Local or Regional Significance, using all available media. Public information will be disseminated in phases, in accordance with the size and scope of the emergency or disaster.

Initially, the public information function will be covered by the response agency responsible for the scene (e.g., police, fire, water, *etc.*). Because of the nature of the incident(s), a PIO team may need to be dispatched to deal with the media at the scene of an incident in support of the Incident Commander.

In large-scale incidents, the PIO function will be conducted from a Joint Information Center (JIC) that may include other non-City jurisdictions. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Other regional cities/towns
- Regional counties
- Area fire districts
- Nongovernmental organizations such as the American Red Cross
- State of Arizona
- Federal Government
- Utilities, business, and industry

The purpose of the JIC is not to control the activities of other jurisdictions, but to provide a forum for the sharing of information between jurisdictions and a central point for the media to get information.

## Comprehensive Emergency Management

### Preparedness

ESF #15 primary and support agencies are responsible for ensuring that the following preparedness items are fully addressed:

- Review and revise their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs)/Field Operating Guidelines (FOGs) annually
- Establish procedures for alerting their own personnel and other key employees in an Incident of Local or Regional Significance
- Update equipment and resource listings on an annual or more frequent basis, and distribute them appropriately
- Train employees on specific ESF functions
- Regularly attend scheduled tabletop exercises and all other applicable training events
- Review and analyze lessons learned in emergency/disaster incidents that have occurred elsewhere, and make appropriate corrections/additions to their respective SOPs/SOGs and this ESF

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## **Response**

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ESF #15 primary and support agencies are responsible for ensuring that the following response items are fully addressed:

- Establish and maintain contact with the Incident Commander and/or appropriate Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for instructions
- Maintain ongoing information exchange with ESF #5 – Emergency Management
- Coordinate the dissemination of all disaster information to the news media via news releases, news conferences, and media telephone inquiries
- Provide information directly to the public via the news media, and the Internet using City of Tucson and other joint regional public information sites (e.g., the Pima County Health Department's web site)
- Clearly document all related costs, actions, and communications

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## **Recovery**

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ESF #15 primary and support agencies are responsible for the following:

- Consult with ESF #5 and ESF #14 – Long-term Community Recovery & Mitigation regarding needed recovery strategy
- Continue the public information program providing information and instructions about city, county, state and federal government emergency operations; future plans for restoration of disaster effected areas; and instructions on how to apply for federal disaster assistance programs administered by the state
- Continue to assess and track losses of equipment and personnel, develop estimates of monetary loss, and identify possible funding sources
- Assess need for critical incident stress management for personnel

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## **Mitigation/Prevention**

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ESF #15 primary and support agencies are responsible for the following:

- Conduct threat, risk, and vulnerability assessments of key ESF infrastructure
  - Review and analyze lessons learned in emergency/disaster incidents that have occurred elsewhere, and make changes where applicable
  - Replace equipment, vehicles and/or personnel
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## **Responsibilities**

### **Coordinating and Primary Agency: Information Technology Department**

The City of Tucson Information Technology Department is responsible for coordinating the Public Information ESF in an Incident of Local or Regional Significance. As such, their duties/responsibilities include:

- Pre-incident planning and coordination
- Manage the financial aspects of the ESF #15 response, including the funding of mission assignments and/or reimbursable agreements

- Maintain ongoing contact with ESF primary and support agencies
- Conduct periodic ESF meetings and/or conference calls
- Coordinate ESF activities relating to Incidents of Local or Regional Significance, catastrophic incident planning, and critical infrastructure preparedness, as appropriate
- Coordinate training and strategies with the appropriate local, county, regional, state or federal agencies

As Primary Agency, their functions include, but are not limited to:

- Organize and coordinate the emergency public information program for the City, to include the preparation and maintenance of a JIC procedures manual
- Conduct training for City department personnel whose normal duties may not include PIO functions
- Establish and coordinate procedures, and determine the designated facilities for use by the City PIO Team during emergencies and disasters
- Provide trained PIO staff that can independently set up and operate the Joint Information Center

## Support Agencies

Agency	Functions
Mayor of Tucson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance regarding the release of information through the PIO office</li> </ul>
City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with disseminating verified and credible information in their Wards as necessary</li> </ul>
City Manager's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance on the release of information through the PIO office</li> </ul>
Environmental Services Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the services of a trained Public Information Officer(s) and staff to the Joint Information Center.</li> </ul>
Tucson Fire Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the services of a trained Public Information Officer(s), and staff, to the Joint Information Center</li> </ul>
General Services Department	<b>Communications Division</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with the technical communications aspects of setting up, operating, and maintaining a Joint Information Center as necessary and as capable</li> </ul>
Housing & Community Development Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with disseminating verified and credible information through their identified neighborhood associations as necessary</li> </ul>
Parks & Recreation Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the services of a trained Public Information Officer(s), and staff, to the Joint Information Center</li> </ul>
Tucson Police Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the services of a trained Public Information Officer(s), and staff, to the Joint Information Center</li> </ul>

Tucson Water Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the services of a trained Public Information Officer(s), and staff, to the Joint Information Center</li> </ul>
Americans With Disabilities Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate the collection and/or release of verified and credible information with the various special needs organizations within the City</li> </ul>
City Attorney's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide legal assistance during an Incident of Local or Regional Significance</li> </ul>
City Clerk's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform documentation/record keeping duties to ensure information is appropriately archived</li> </ul>
American Red Cross	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As needed, provide the services of a trained Public Information Officer(s), and staff, to the Joint Information Center</li> </ul>
Pima County Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the services of a trained Public Information Officer(s), and staff, to the Joint Information Center</li> </ul>
	<b>R.A.C.E.S.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide amateur radio capability to inform the public of disaster-related information</li> </ul>
Pima County Public Health Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the services of a trained Public Information Officer(s), and staff, to the Joint Information Center</li> </ul>